

## **WIREC reaches enrollment goal**

The Washington & Idaho Regional Extension Center for Health Information Technology (WIREC) just recently reached 100% of its enrollment goal of 2,369 primary care providers receiving assistance through its program. Here is the link to the press release:

<http://www.qualishealth.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/WIREC-reaches-100-percent-of-its-healthcare-provider-enrollment-goals>

WIREC, a program spearheaded by Qualis Health and several partner organizations across the region, offers technical assistance consulting services to help practices successfully adopt electronic health records (EHRs) and meet the meaningful use criteria to qualify for the CMS incentive payments.

Adopting EHRs and using them in a meaningful way helps healthcare practitioners improve the quality, safety and efficiency of care for patients through better data capture and sharing, enhanced care coordination, and improved population health management. Ultimately, reaching meaningful use and successfully using health IT will be a foundational aspect in practice transformation: delivering more effective care at a lower cost while also engaging patients and families in their own healthcare.

"Washington and Idaho have both made great strides towards an electronically-enabled healthcare system, and WIREC has played an important role by supporting clinicians as they more effectively use health IT," said Jonathan Sugarman, MD, MPH, Chief Executive Officer of Qualis Health. "Today's announcement is a testament to the dedication of practitioners and the Regional Extension Center staff to improve the quality and delivery of healthcare through EHRs."

Primary Health Medical Group, a multi-specialty medical practice in southwest Idaho, was the first healthcare organization in the state of Idaho to have a physician attest to meaningful use. Dr. James Weiss from PHMG states, "I'm happy to incorporate the Meaningful Use guidelines in my practice. I believe demonstrating our effective use of electronic health records is vital to promoting cost-effective 21<sup>st</sup> century medicine. I would never dream of going back to paper charts now that I use the electronic health record. My patients love the fact that I am connected electronically to their pharmacies, their hospital records, and their personal email if they wish to set up the secure messaging system. I would encourage every physician in the United States to adopt an electronic health record and meet the Meaningful Use standards." Dr. David Peterman, President of PHMG adds, "WIREC was a resource for understanding the Meaningful Use criteria rules. Because the rules were new to everyone, it was helpful to have a resource that either provided answers or did the research to find the answers."

Primary care practices (Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/GYN) may qualify to receive WIREC services at no charge, thanks to Recovery Act funding awarded to WIREC from the US Department of Health and Human Services. The subsidies are specifically intended to help small practices and those serving safety-net populations adopt EHRs. Nationwide, clinicians in these types of practices deliver the majority of primary care services, but have the lowest rates of EHR adoption and are the least likely to have the resources to successfully adopt EHRs and reach meaningful use without additional technical consulting assistance.